

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7700

INFO AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY ROME

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AFDROUGHT

FOME FOR FODAG

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: BULK GRAIN SHIPMENTS TO UPPER VOLTA VIA PORT OF LOME

REF: A) STATE 0899969 (NOTAL)

B) NIAMEY 1213

C) LOME 0868 (NOTAL)

D) LOME 0577 (NOTAL)

1. DECISION OF SS YELLOWSTONE OWNERS NOT DIVERT 3,999 MT BULK SORGHUM

TO LOME (REF. A) APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN BASED ON STALE INFORMATION ABOUT PORT OF LOME GLEANED FROM SHIPPERS' HANDBOOK. FACT IS THAT LOME PORT DOES INDEED HAVE CAPACITY HANDLE BULK CARGOES. FOLLOWING DETAILS WERE COMMUNICATED TO ADO/NIAMEY (REFS C AND D) AND WERE PASSED TO JAMES/MAXWELL AT MID-MARCH ABIDJAN MEETING.

2. SINCE EARLY 1974 AIDOFF MET ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WITH PORT AND GOT AUTHORITIES, SACOTRA OFFICIALS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF DELTA LINES TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITIES FOR BULK SHIPMENTS INTO LOME.

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PORT DIRECTOR BEHRENS HAS MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH SACOTRA WHEREBY

PORT ITSELF WILL HANDLE DISCHARGE BULK SORGHUM, TRANSPORT IT DIRECTLY TO PORT WAREHOUSE OR TO LOCAL FLOUR MILL FOR STORAGE, BAG IT USING SEMI-AUTOMATIC MACHINE SUPPLIED BY PORT AND PROVIDE STORAGE AGAIN IN PORT WAREHOUSE UNTIL SHIPMENT TO OUAGA. GIVEN CURRENT AND PROJECTED PORT BUSINESS, 24 HOUR NOTICE DURING WEEK AND 48 HOUR NOTICE ON WEEKENDS REQUIRED PRIOR BULK GRAIN SHIP ARRIVALS.

3. PORT HAS AVAILABLE NOW ONE ELECTRICAL, CHAIN-SLIDING TYPE, SWISS MADE (BUHLER) BULK CARGO EVACUATOR WITH 70 MT/HOUR CAPACITY. PORT HAS USED DEVICE ONLY ONCE WITH MINIMAL LOSSES (1 PERCENT) AND GENERALLY GOOD RESULTS, EXCEPT FOR DISAPPOINTINGLY SLOWER SPEED OF 35 MT/HOUR. PRIMARY CAUSE FOR SLOWER SPEED WAS SHIP CONFIGURATION WHICH MADE IT DIFFICULT TO REACH BULK CARGO IN HATCHES. BEHRENS IS CONFIDENT, HOWEVER, THAT WITH U.S. SORGHUM, EVACUATOR WILL HANDLE 50 MT/MT HOUR. OUT OF CONCERN THAT LARGE, DEEP HATCHES OF DELTA LINES' SHIPS COULD POSE SIMILAR PROBLEM, PROJOFF DISCUSSED QUESTION WITH DELTA'S DUREL LANDRY, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR SALES, ON MARCH 8 DURING HIS LOME VISIT. THOUGH HE HAD NOT YET SEEN EVACUATOR, LANDRY INDICATED THAT IF NECESSARY COMPANY COULD COMPENSATE SOMEWHAT FOR EVACUATOR BY LOADING BULK SORGHUM ONLY IN MOST ACCESSIBLE HATCHES.

4. SOCIETE GENERALE DES MOULINS DU TOGO, LOME'S RECENTLY OPENED FLOUR

MILL, HAS WITHIN ONE KILOMETER OF PORT AREA, FOUR 1,999 MT GRAIN STORAGE SILOS. ONLY THE ONE SILO NOW BEING USED IS EXPECTED BE NEEDED BY MILL BEFORE AUGUST, 1974. THUS, IN ADDITION TO PORT'S STORAGE CAPACITY IN WAREHOUSES, UP TO 3,000 MT STORAGE IS AVAILABLE FOR U.S. SORGHUM IN THESE THREE SILOS. INITIAL QUOTE BY MOULIN FOR SILO STORAGE IS 6,000 CFA/DAY/SILO OR 180,000 CFA/MONTH/SILO. UNDER BEHRENS PROPOSAL OUTLINED ABOVE, AFTER BULK SORGHUM UNLOADED, IT WOULD BE STORED IN PORT WAREHOUSES WHERE BAGGING WOULD TAKE PLACE. SORGHUM CAN BE STORED IN PORT FREE OF CHARGE FOR CUSTOMARY 25 DAYS.

5. BAGGING AT MOULIN, USING ITS AUTOMATIC BAGGING MACHINE, NOT POSSIBLE SINCE SORGHUM WOULD HAVE TO PASS THROUGH ENTIRE MOULIN PROCESSES BEFORE REACHING BAGGER. HOWEVER, PORT HAS ARRANGED FOR SEMI-AUTOMATIC BAGGING MACHINE WITH CAPACITY 5 MT/HOUR. A SECOND, HIGHER CAPACITY BAGGING MACHINE HAS BEEN PURCHASED IN FRANCE AND UNCLASSIFIED

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IS EXPECTED MOMENTARILY BY AIRFREIGHT. BAGGING WILL TAKE PLACE ROUND THE CLOCK. RATE OF 100-120 MT PER DAY USING PRESENT EQUIPMENT SUPPLEMENTED WITH BAGGING BY HAND IS SUFFICIENT GIVEN AVAILABILITY OF TRANSPORT OUT OF LOME.

6. IN LATE APRIL LOME PORT OFFICIALS, AIDOFF AND SACOTRA REPRESENTATIVES AGAIN REVIEWED REQUIREMENTS FOR 3,000 MT EXPERIMENTAL BULK SHIPMENT. WE AGREED PORT HAS CAPACITY UNLOAD AND STORE 3,000 MT

BULK CARGO, EVEN IF 2,000 MT SACKED CARGO ARRIVES IN PORT DURING SAME MONTH. IF MOVEMENT OF GRAIN TO OUAGA DEPAID AT ALL, LIKELY CAUSE WOULD BE AVAILABILITY TRUCKS RATHER THAN CAPACITY OR EFFICIENCY OF PORT. ALL PARTICIPANTS ALSO CONCURRED FULLY WITH ADO/NIAMEY REQUEST THAT PART OF YELLOWSTONE CARGO BE DIVERTED (REF B) IN LATE MAY TO LOME. SACOTRA QUOTED TO AIDOFF ON MAY 13 A PRICE OF 14,215 CFA/MT ALL INCLUSIVE, FOR BULK SORGHUM LOME-OUAGA.

7. ON MAY 3 AIDOFF AND ASSISTANT, PORT DIRECTOR BEHRENS, PORT PILOT AND CHIEF MATE OF DELTA MEXICO WENT OVER SITUATION ONCE AGAIN. CHIEF MATE EXAMINED EVACUATOR, AND CALCULATED THAT UNLOADING WOULD TAKE THREE DAYS FOR 3,000 MT AT RATE OF 50 MT/HOUR IF CREWS WORK ROUND THE CLOCK AS WE PLAN. ASSUMING 3,000 MT WOULD BE STOWED IN THREE CENTER HATCHES FOR BALANCED UNLOADING, MATE ALSO DETERMINED THAT ALL THREE LEVELS OF EACH HATCH WOULD BE NEEDED. USING 35 FT AS DISTANCE FROM MIDDLE OF CENTER HATCHES TO WHARF, LOME PORT EVACUATOR WILL REACH DOWN TO WITHIN ONE FOOT OF HATCH BOTTOM WHERE TRIMMERS WILL DO THE REST.

8. AS INDIVIDUAL WHO WILL "BE STUCK" WITH JOB OF STRAIGHTENING OUT ANY SNAFU RESULTING FROM BULK SHIPMENTS INTO LOME, AIDOFF HAS TAKEN PAINS TO CHALLENGE IN DETAIL ASSURANCES OF PORT OFFICIALS AND TRANSIT AGENT THAT BULK SHIPMENTS WILL BE NO PROBLEM. INITIAL DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED IN 1973 AT TEMA HAVE BEEN BROUGHT UP REPEATEDLY AS EXAMPLE OF HOW THINGS CAN GO WRONG. BELIEVE THAT FOREGOING DETAILS SUBSTANTIATE OUR CONCLUSION THAT PORT OF LOME IS READY TO RECEIVE BULK SORGHUM SHIPMENTS. CURRAN

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